



WACHUSETT RESERVOIR

General Information: Located slightly northeast of Worcester in the towns of West Boylston, Boylston, Clinton and Sterling, Wachusett Reservoir stretches 8.4 miles in length, covers 6.5 square miles (4,135 acres) and is bordered by 37 miles of shoreline. The maximum depth is 129 feet and the average depth is 45 feet. Shoreline fishing in designated areas is allowed, but **absolutely no boats may be put on the reservoir and no ice fishing is allowed.** Aside from numerous tributary streams, there are three main sources feeding the reservoir. Two moderate size rivers, the Quinapoxet and Stillwater, empty into western cove known as the Thomas Basin. The remaining major source of water is Quabbin Reservoir, connected to Wachusett Reservoir via an underground aqueduct emptying near the mouth of the Quinapoxet River. Access is available off of Routes 12, 140, 110 and 70. **Note, however, that this map is outdated. The “no fishing” zone now stretches to the vicinity of Gate 6 on the Route 70 side of the reservoir, NOT Gate 3 as it appears on this map.** The reservoir is normally open to fishing from April 1 through November 30, but anglers should check with the Wachusett Office of the MDC (tel. 978-365-3272) if ice is present.

Fish Populations: The fish populations in Wachusett have been routinely monitored for the past several decades and the management plan is now being revised and updated. Four salmonid species inhabit the reservoir: lake trout, rainbow trout, brown trout and landlocked salmon. The rainbows and browns are escapees from the put and take fisheries in Wachusett's tributaries.

Smelt are the vital forage fish in this water. It appears the lake trout population has recently outgrown this forage base, resulting in reduced growth rates and large numbers of lakerys fewer than 20 inches. Many larger, older fish are still present, however. Landlocked salmon have done very well in recent years, and many fish in the 3-4 pound class are now available to anglers. Other gamefish present include smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and chain pickerel, with smallmouth bass considerably more abundant than the latter two fishes. Panfish such as yellow perch, white perch, bluegills, pumpkinseeds, rock bass, yellow bullhead and brown bullhead compose the panfish.

Fishing: Both rivers are stocked each spring with trout along most of their courses, but the lake trout and salmon are the reservoir's main draw for anglers. Most are taken in the early spring when these fish are chasing smelt. Remember that it is illegal to fish for, use, or possess smelt, dead or alive, from March 1 to May 15. Shiners serve as an adequate substitute. Later in the season, especially from May through mid-June, many anglers enjoy spectacular smallmouth action. The reservoir routinely produces trophy smallmouths and lake trout, and a new salmon record is a possibility. Be aware that, due to mercury contamination, there is a health advisory in effect for some species of fish from this water. Details are posted near gate signs. Please help keep the Wachusett Reservoir area **litter free!**

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